

THE SSA NEWS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Food Stamp Accuracy Update	2
Children and Family Services Division Voted "Agency of the Year"	2
Multicultural Advisory Committee Update	3
CalWORKs Anniversary	3
Children and Family Services Strategic Plan	4
Fiesta Latina	4
Mayor Proclaims Tustin First City in Recruitment Campaign	5
What You Are Dying To Know About CalWIN	5
Congratulations to Our New Mentors. CFS-Quality Development Program	6
Kudos	6

Coming Soon!

- CFS Fos/Adopt Recruitment Booth at the Orange International Street Fair, August 29-31.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER by Angelo Doti

I would like to update you on where we are "budgetarily" since our last newsletter. Our Board adopted a budget, as required by law, to meet a balanced County budget plan by June 30. Without a State budget, we all recognize this adopted plan is just our best guess for every agency/department and that major adjustments will be required after a formal State budget is finally adopted. Please note that any Federal budget adopted after October 1 (FFY) may require another State and County revisit. We have established a target and now await our next instructions. We are all staying glued to the six State proposals on the budget table and quite honestly, the proposals are so diverse that it is impossible to speculate where this dilemma will go. Much of this is on-line and the public can view proposals in detail. Meanwhile, the latest Food Stamp QC error rate issues and possible performance sanctions have hit the media. For the last Federal review period we were deficient, and therefore, have sanction liability. Now, Child Welfare enters a QC-type of system holding us accountable for new outcome performance indicators. It is interesting that as our fiscal problems limit our options for performance solutions, our senior partners (Federal and State governments), the architects of the programs we are mandated to perform, are now threatening our very capability to perform quality work. Do you get the feeling that as a junior partner in this equation, we are witnessing our options being reduced? When we know more, you will be advised of our status. Please let us know if you have suggestions or use your LMC to communicate further cost saving suggestions. As always, thanks for your patience.

Thanks From Former SSA Director

Dear Angelo:

I am writing to communicate a long overdue thank you to the many SSA staff that helped put together the retirement event, memory books and other materials for me upon my retirement in January. The quality of the work and the dedication and caring that it shows really puts a lump in my throat every time I think about the event or look at the memory books and other materials. All of it is very meaningful to me and I want everyone to know how much it is appreciated.

On a current and much sadder note, I want to also thank the many SSA employees who expressed sympathy and condolences on the passing of my father, Marvin L. Leaman, on June 10. My dad fought a 10 month battle that began with a mild stroke and fall, and then more recently major stomach surgery to attack life threatening bleeding ulcers, followed by pneumonia. Through it all he tried hard to recover, but the blows became too many. He was 90. I really appreciate, as does my wife Carol and our two daughters, Karen and Kathy, the outpouring of encouragement that we have received from many in SSA.

Larry M. Leaman

Food Stamp Accuracy Update

Submitted by Ingrid Harita and Patsy Calvert

Staff who work with Food Stamps makes progress on payment accuracy.

Thanks to those who are committed to improving Orange County's performance in the Food Stamp Program. Although there is still major work to be done to continue to lower our Food Stamp error rate, it is evident that staff are making a conscious effort to complete casework more accurately. Orange County's Food Stamp error rate for the month of February was 7.30%, which lowers our cumulative error rate to 8.67%. Each month for the past four months, our error rate has been getting lower. However, our goal is to be under the estimated Federal tolerance level of 8.1% by the end of this Federal Fiscal Year, September 2003.

Consultants

During the end of May and the first two weeks of June, Deloitte and Touché and the Rushmore Group reviewed Orange County's operational practices, staff program knowledge, and data collection with regards to Food Stamps accuracy. We want to thank all the staff who participated in the process, especially the focus groups. Recommendations were made at the end of June which we expect to act on as resources permit.

Food Stamp Case Reviews

Supervisory and PIC case review results for April are in. Of the cases reviewed, \$549,304 was issued, and \$22,434 (4.1%) was issued in error. Of the 2,984 cases reviewed, 255 (8.5%) had an error. Although the two most error prone areas are Income and Shelter Deductions, there appears to be more CFAP/Citizenship errors for April than in past months.

Food Stamp Survey Results

On May 27th we sent out our fifth monthly Food Stamp survey. The survey's main focus was Income. The overall accuracy on the survey was 82%. At the end of May, Transitional Budgeting and Discontinued income training material was distributed to second line supervisors in both the ASAP and FSS Divisions, with instructions to train district staff by June 12th. This training was developed based on survey results for February.

Children and Family Services Division Voted "Agency of the Year"

On May 9, 2003 Gil Carmona, Assistant Dean of University of Southern California School of Social Work, Orange County, presented Deputy Director, Glorious Lawrence and Children and Family Services' Internship Coordinator, Clem Bonner, with the "Agency of the Year" Award. The award is presented annually, with Children and Family Services being among more than 100 agencies considered for the honor.

Children and Family Services provides an internship training curriculum that supports the field instructors in educating and preparing students for the challenges and changing demands of the social work profession. The Internship Training Curriculum Committee members are Clem Bonner, Senior Social Services Supervisor with

Quality Development; Michael Dedee, Senior Social Services Supervisor with the Foster Care Development and Support Team; Tracy Rechen, Senior Social Services Supervisor with Resource Development and Management Support; Alice Apodoca, Senior Social Services Supervisor with Integrated Continuing Services; and Leslie Dale, Senior Social Worker with Special Programs.

USC chose the top agency based on student evaluations, student feedback, USC's field faculty observation, and visits and interface with the agency's internship coordinator and field instructors. The Awards Committee selected the top five agencies from more than 100 agencies. Out of the top five, Orange County Children and Family Services was selected "Agency of the Year." Attending the awards ceremony were Frances Caple,

Associate Dean of Student Affairs from USC School of Social Work, Los Angeles; Micki Gress, Assistant Dean for Field Education also from USC School of Social Work, Los Angeles; and Senior Social Worker, Leslie Dale.

Clem Bonner commented that the CFS internship program provides students with a supportive and learning environment that is flexible, autonomous, and engages students in a mutual teaching and learning process. The Internship Training Curriculum Committee maintains a commitment to this participatory method of learning, and the reward for the committee's hard work and commitment is having CFS voted "Agency of the Year."

"Each month for the past four months, our error rate has been getting lower."

"CFS provides an internship training curriculum that supports the field instructors in educating and preparing students for the challenges and changing demands of the social work profession."

Multicultural Advisory Committee Update

Our communities are rapidly expanding to include new cultural groups. SSA is committed to meeting the needs of these groups and developing our agency as our communities change. SSA's Multicultural Advisory Committee's (MCAC) purpose

is to help all SSA divisions achieve established goals while recognizing and maintaining sensitivity to the multicultural diversity found in SSA's workforce and clientele. MCAC's mission is to provide a vehicle for all



June, 2003, MCAC meeting members. Front row left to right: Matthew Le, Rosie Maffey, Lily Tamura, Dee Pope, Lynn Hurd, Richard Punzalan. Back row left to right: David Zietz, Lynda Bengtsson, Ingrid Harita, Dwight Tipping, Francisco Romero.

ethnic and cultural groups to address cultural issues and to ensure the delivery of culturally sensitive services to the community. Projects involve the development of resources, recruitment, professional growth and cultural awareness in employee relationships, supervision, and service

delivery.

Currently the MCAC is comprised of a cross section of employees representing different cultures and values. Each SSA division is represented as well as the African American Roundtable, the Asian Forum and the Spanish Speaking Workers Forum. MCAC is finalizing its development of

guidelines for the inclusion of new self-identified groups, and is available to help such groups by providing information and assistance toward their self-development. Please contact MCAC Chair Lynn Hurd at 714-825-3045 for more information.

“MCAC’s mission is to provide a vehicle for all ethnic and cultural groups to address cultural issues and to ensure the delivery of culturally sensitive services to the community.”

CalWORKs Anniversary

Happy anniversary! Five years ago, SSA's "fully reengineered service delivery" system (CalWORKs as we know it) was implemented. Nearly two years of planning, restructuring, and training resulted in a program that is designed to address the diverse needs of all family members. So much of our success has to do with the way we treat our customers. After all, we are in the "people business." We listen, guide, and help them make choices. Our hard work and dedication pays off in countless ways. Each client's success becomes a success we all share.

Lina Tapia's client shared with her that he was having difficulty driving to interviews because he was unable to clearly see street signs. He wore glasses but he had not had an examination or a new prescription in quite some

time. His son had broken his own glasses and consequently, his schoolwork was suffering. Medi-cal was unable to provide them with optometry services. Lina made referrals to ACS and ACTT, but at the same time she contacted Joao Martins, one of our volunteers who participates in the Community Partners Program. Joao quickly responded with referrals for both the client and his son for free examinations and glasses at LensCrafters. Soon after, the client became employed as a service technician with a beginning wage of \$20 per hour!

Ms. R is a divorced mother of three who emigrated from Mexico in 1985. She is also a domestic abuse victim. To support her family and become independent from her ex-husband, Ms. R applied for CalWORKs. She attended ESL classes while holding

down a packing and assembly job. Ms. R knew that eventually she wanted to run her own home day-care center. Through the Welfare-To-Work program, she was able to obtain her childcare license. Ms. R was able to combine her love for taking care of children with her goal of becoming self-sufficient. She is a positive role model for her own children and other Welfare-To-Work participants with whom she has come in contact.

Welfare in California is no longer a paper-driven entitlement program. Today, CalWORKs provides temporary assistance and support that allows families to move beyond dependency to self-sufficiency. As we interact with our clients, listen and respond to their needs, we should be very proud of what we have accomplished in the past five years.

“Each client’s success becomes a success we all share.”

“Establishing an adequate network of family foster care... Reducing reliance on institutional care... Intensifying efforts to screen children being considered for removal from home... Involving foster families and community... Becoming neighborhood resource for children...”

“See you at next year’s fiesta!”

Children and Family Services Strategic Plan

Recent State and Federal legislation has established new child welfare performance standards that will require counties to use outcome-based performance measures to evaluate the safety, permanency and well being of children served by the child welfare system. In light of these changes, Children and Family Services is redefining its Strategic Plan to incorporate practices designed to support better outcomes for children and families.

Family-to-Family, a reform initiative developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, was selected to serve as a framework for Children and Family Services’ Strategic Plan. It was designed in 1992 and has now been field tested in communities across the country, including 12 states and 13 California counties. The Initiative focuses on the following goals:

- Establishing an adequate network of family foster care that is more neighborhood based, culturally sensitive, and capable of providing care for sibling groups located primarily in the communities in which the children live.
- Reducing reliance on institutional care (in shelters and group homes) by placing children with relatives or foster families.
- Intensifying efforts to screen children being considered for removal from home to determine what services might be provided to safely preserve the family.
- Involving foster families and community partners as team members in family reunification efforts.
- Becoming a neighborhood resource for children and families and investing in the capacity of communities from which the foster care population comes.

There are four core strategies at the heart of *Family-to-Family*. These include recruitment and training, building community partnerships, team decision making and self-evaluation. Children and Families Services is currently in the planning stages of *Family-to-Family* implementation. County, community and family partners are being recruited to help us in our efforts to redesign how we do business.

Adapted from literature provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Fiesta Latina

On June 12, 2003, SSA employees celebrated the annual Fiesta Latina at Santa Ana Regional Centre. The Los Arcos Restaurant Familiar of Santa Ana served delicious lunches of chicken and beef fajitas, rice, beans, chips and salsa, with cake for dessert. As we dined on this tasty lunch, we were serenaded by the sounds of the Mariachi Zacatecas. The Mariachis tried to find a few volunteer dancers and singers from the crowd, but none of us were that brave. Martha Fruichantie, Employment Eligibility Specialist, and Marsha Medina, Social Worker II, hosted the raffle. Many employees won fabulous prizes. See you at next year’s fiesta!



Mariachi Zacatecas



Martha Fruichantie and Marsha Medina lead the raffle at the Fiesta Latina

Mayor Proclaims Tustin First City in Recruitment Campaign

The Tustin City Council proclaimed June as "Foster Care Month" in support of Children and Family Service's City by City Recruitment Campaign. Mayor Tracy Wills Worley recently presented the proclamation to Program Manager Denise Churchill and Foster and Adoptive Family Development Team Supervisor Michael Dedee. Other staff present were Juan Herrera, Tamara Bowman, Cindy Roe, Robin Ballon, and Melanie Collins from FaCT.

About eight months ago, Senior Social Worker, Juan Herrera, approached his supervisor with an idea to focus recruitment efforts on one city at a time. The plan will immerse a city with information identifying the need for foster and adoptive homes. Staff will recruit in many businesses, schools, churches, agencies and civic organizations, and hold

trainings in that city. A goal of the campaign is to strive to keep foster care children in their own communities. The unit will target each city for

everywhere, all the time," said Mike Dedee.

The State released a report which mentioned, "the day we prevail in our mission will be the day that we (as a community) monitor the health, education, well-being, and overall success of foster children the same way that we do for our own children." Orange County also believes this to be true.



Pictured from left to right are: Cindy Roe, Robin Ballon, Juan Herrera, Cheryl Fuller-foster parent, Denise Churchill, Mike Dedee and Tamara Bowman, with the Tustin City Council pictured behind

three months. By working hard at constructing better and more solid relations within the Orange County community, the unit will strive to utilize that strong collaboration in finding homes for our children. "Recruitment is about being visible so the message that our children need homes is

Orange County Children and Family Services knows everyone can help find homes for our children. You can help the recruitment and training team by directing them to places in your area to make a presentation or just answer some questions. If you have a contact for them, please call Michael Dedee at 714-940-3965.

"Recruitment is about being visible so the message that our children need homes is everywhere, all the time..."

What You Are Dying To Know About CalWIN But Are Afraid To Ask

Can anyone guess what the majority of people want to know about CalWIN? Although inquiries vary from the functional to the technical aspects of CalWIN, there is one burning desire out there, "what's in it for me?" How do I know this, you may ask? I have read the Business Process Q & As on the Intranet CalWIN site.

In case you have not heard or have forgotten, CalWIN has a

mailbox in Outlook. To send a message to CalWIN, click "To" to find a contact and select "CalWIN Questions", or just type it. Write your question(s) and send it. Some questions may take longer to answer than others, depending on the research required. The response is sent directly to you and will also be published in the Intranet.

To view Q & As already posted, click on the link:

http://admin/Technology_Services/Main/CalWIN/CalWIN_Questions/CalWINQuestions.htm.

To view other information on CalWIN, click the link below: http://admin/Technology_Services/Main/CalWIN/CalWINHome.htm.

"CalWIN has a mailbox in Outlook."

We welcome your input regarding this newsletter. For information on submitting articles, contact Debbie Kroner at (714) 541-7734
 Deborah.Kroner@ssa.ocgov.com
 or
 Sylvia Almazán at (714) 245-6274
 Sylvia.Almazan@ssa.ocgov.com

Angelo Doti, Publisher
 Debbie Kroner, Editor
 Sylvia Almazán, Assoc. Editor

Visit our web site
www.oc.ca.gov/ssa/



- * Articles for the August issue of The SSA NEWS are due by July 28, 2003!
- * Please limit your articles to 225 words maximum and send them via email.
 Thanks.

Congratulations to Our New Mentors! Children and Family Services-Quality Development Program

By Joanne Munro

The Mentorship program at Children and Family Services continues to expand. The goal of the program is to provide support and encourage employees to promote within the agency as well as improve overall retention of staff. Many of our Senior Social Services Supervisors (SSSS's) and Program Managers (PM's) have attended the mandatory Mentorship Training and have agreed to mentor a newly promoted SSSS or a Senior Social Worker (SSW) wishing to promote. We would like to thank the new Mentors in site support that have made a one-year commitment to be paired with a protégé and assist that employee in career development. Involvement in the program can be very rewarding for both mentors and protégés. If you are interested in becoming involved in the Mentorship Program and work for CFS, please contact Joanne Munro, Marriage and Family Therapist at 714-704-8827.

KUDOS

Mary Resna, Long-Term Care Eligibility Worker Mary Resna, Adult Services and Assistance Programs/Medi-Cal Specialization Regional Centre: "Mary, thank you for all your efforts and success with the Inter County Transfer of my Dad's paperwork. It is people like you that ease the stress in a very emotional time. I appreciate all your time spent with my Dad's case." (Sent by a client, forwarded by Elaine Gourdin, Program Manager II, Adult Services and Assistance Programs and Mary Wuerfl, Deputy Director, Adult Services and Assistance Programs.)

Yanghee Kim, Eligibility Technician, Adult Services, Medi-Cal Specialization Regional Centre: "It was nice speaking with you this morning regarding partnering with us at Wycliffe Plaza in Santa Ana. Thank you for your support and help in outreaching to our Korean seniors and persons with disabilities." (Sent by Ranea Pallad, Orange County Office on Aging, forwarded by Mary Wuerfl, Deputy Director, Adult Services and Assistance Programs.)

Orangewood Children's Home Medical Unit: "Thanks for helping me here at Orangewood. Thanks for teaching me how to cope with asthma. I know now how to cope with respiratory problems. Thanks for being there when I was sick. I am ready to face the world. I won't be worried as long as there are people like you in the world. Thanks for being there for my sisters and me." (Sent by a client at Orangewood, forwarded by Gary Taylor, Deputy Director, Orangewood Children's Home.)

Victor Chavez, Staff Analyst I, Administration: Victor recently completed the CalWORKs Incentive Funds After School Enrichment Program. "It has been our pleasure to work with your organization to provide safe, supervised and structured learning environments after school for Orange County students. Congratulations!" (Based on the text of a certificate of recognition signed by William M. Habermehl, County Superintendent of Schools and Ellin Chariton, Executive Director, Division of School and Community Services. Forwarded by Maritza Rodriguez-Farr, Admin. Manager, Administration/Privatization Services.)